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HEADLINE: Lawyers Plan Mock Trial In JFK Death
Part of bar association convention in San Francisco

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BODY:

Some of America's sharpest lawyers and judges will take a new look at the murder of President John F. Kennedy in a high-tech, high-profile mock trial in San Francisco of alleged assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, replete with promises of new evidence in what one lawyer called "the most investigated crime in the history of the world."

The make-believe trial will take place at the Fairmont Hotel on August 10 and 11 as part of the annual convention of the American Bar Association. It is scheduled to be telecast nationwide on the Court TV cable channel.

"We wanted to find the trial of the century, a high-profile event, and there wasn't much question about which trial it would be," said Peter Freeman, a Chicago attorney who organized the project for the ABA. "What we're trying to do is to contribute some insights to a public understanding of the assassination and the role of the trial that we all missed."

NEW EVIDENCE

The showcase of the trial will be the introduction of cutting-edge technical evidence developed by Failure Analysis Associates, a Menlo Park firm that investigates and analyzes disasters such as plane crashes or the collapse of offshore oil rigs.

For example, engineer Jeff Lotz, who will help the prosecution try to prove that Oswald was the lone assassin, said new enhanced inspection of the assassination movie taken by dressmaker Abraham Zapruder shows that the right lapel on the jacket of then-Texas Governor John Connally moved at the same time Kennedy was shot in the neck. Connally, sitting in front of Kennedy in the presidential limousine, was wounded in the attack.

Lotz said this new information supports the hotly contested Warren Commission finding that one bullet (known by critics as the "magic bullet") went through Kennedy and wounded Connally.

Failure Analysis also fired a bullet through a skull filled with beef brains and covered with pigskin to analyze another point of argument raised by conspiracy theorists — that the piece of film showing Kennedy's head snapping backwards proves he was shot from the front. Oswald, allegedly shooting from the Texas School Book Depository, was behind Kennedy.

Lotz said his investigation showed that when the skull was shot, "the motion of the head going back and to the left was consistent with a shot from behind," because the bullet created a shock wave in the brain that caused an explosion of the brains coming out of Kennedy's skull on the right. This made the head go back and to the left, Lotz said.

Attorneys will also use evidence developed by the Warren Commission and the 1979 House Select Committee on Assassinations.

BIG NAMES

Bay Area attorneys John Keker, James Brosnahan and Joseph Cotchett will be the three prosecutors. Keker, former president of the San Francisco Police Commission, was the lead special prosecutor who tried Oliver North in the Iran-Contra case more than three years ago. Brosnahan is well known for his work in First Amendment, civil rights and criminal defense cases, and for being named by the National Law Journal as one of the 10 top lawyers in the United States. And Cotchett is known as the savior of thousands of small savings and loan investors fleeced by S&L czar Charles Keating. Cotchett sued and got an \$ 87 million settlement out of a big law firm and accounting firm that had helped Keating dupe investors.

Oswald's defense will be represented by three partners in the New York law firm Cravath, Swaine & Moore -- one of the nation's most prestigious -- which has defended IBM against government antitrust actions, CBS against General William Westmoreland and Time magazine against former Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

Among the judges will be Carol Corrigan of Alameda County Superior Court; Matt Byrne, the Los Angeles federal judge who dismissed espionage charges against Pentagon Papers figure Daniel Ellsberg in 1973; and New York federal Judge Kimba Wood, who sentenced financier Michael Milken to prison.

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